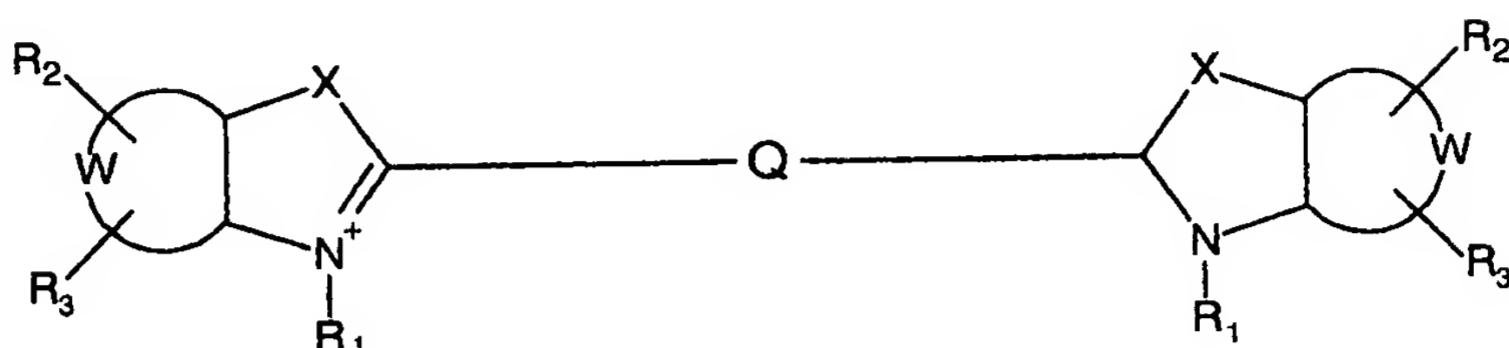


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A symmetric cyanine of the formula:



(1)

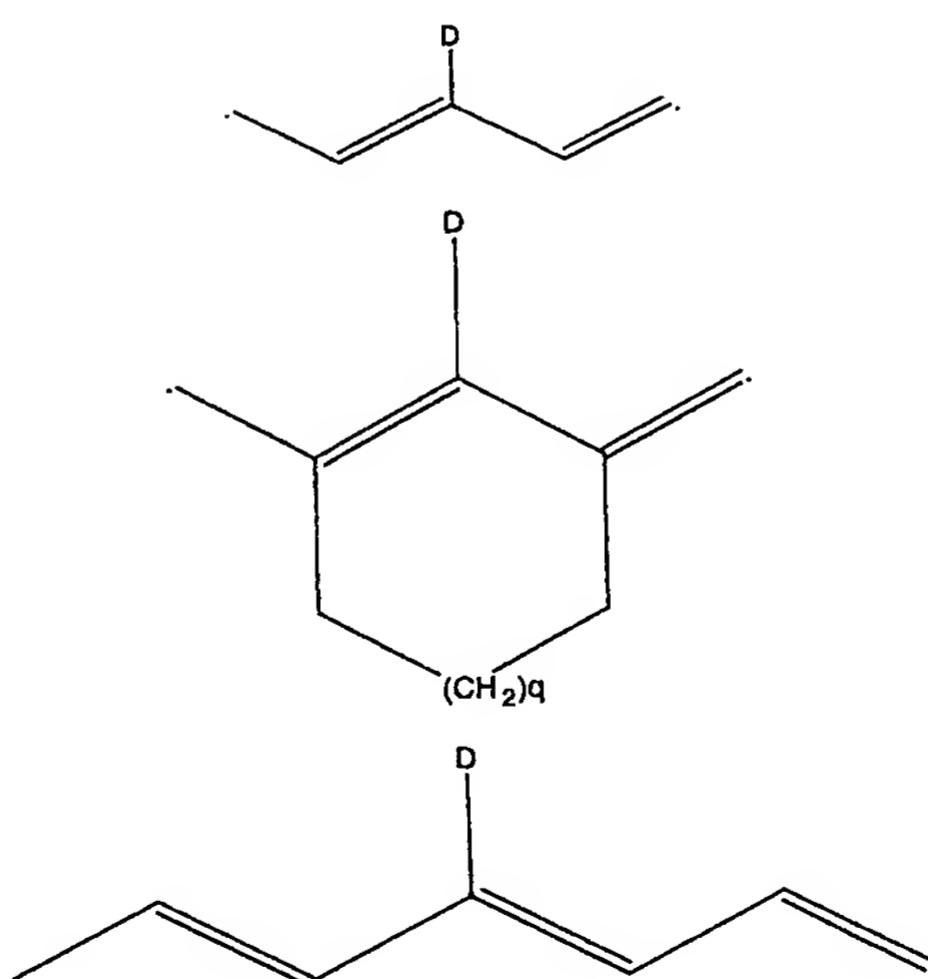
wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of O, S and C(CH₃)₂;
W represents non-metal atoms required to form a benzo-condensed or a naphto-condensed ring;

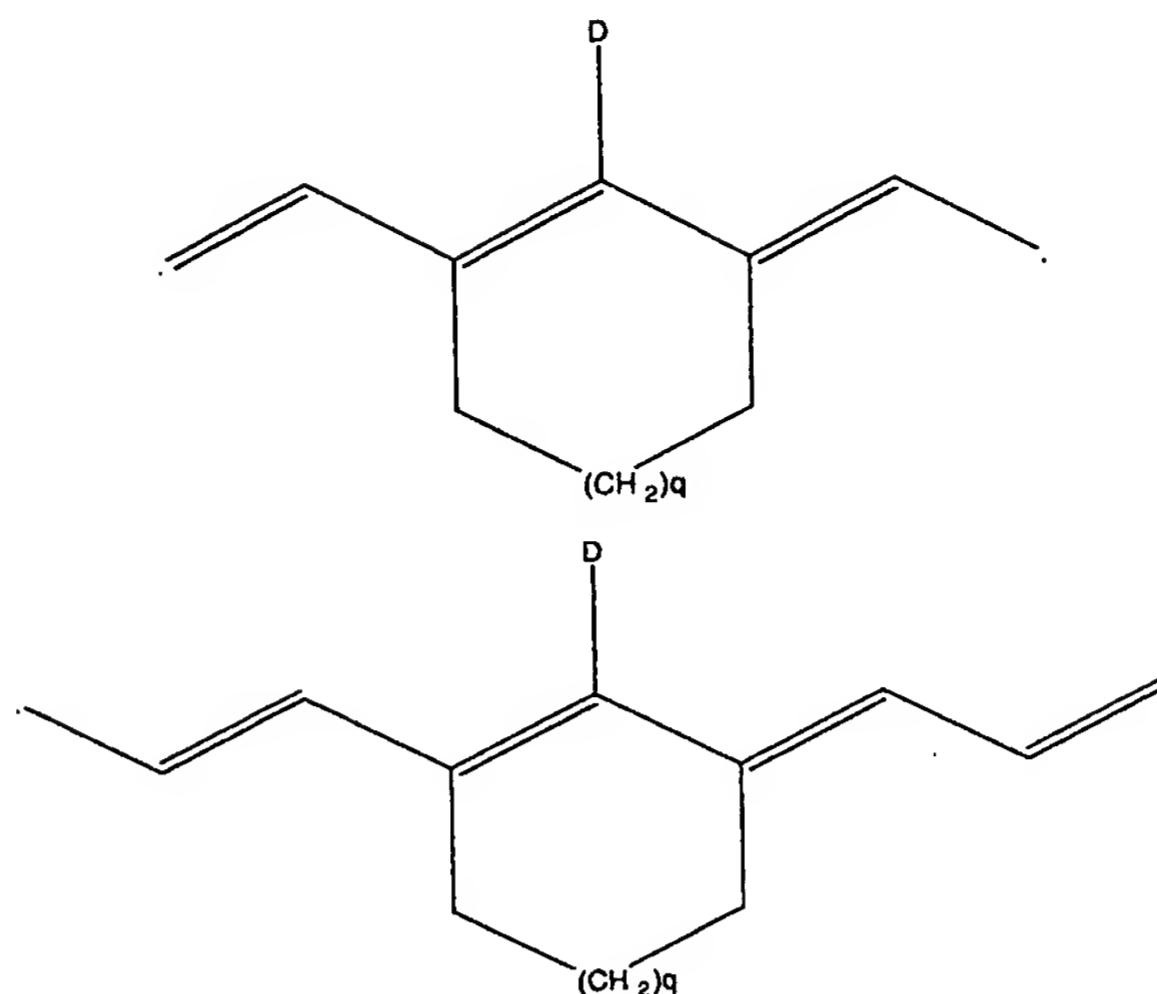
R₁ is selected from the group consisting of (CH₂)_nCH₃, (CH₂)_nSO₃⁻ and (CH₂)_nSO₃H, wherein n is an integer selected from 0 to 6 when R₁ is (CH₂)_nCH₃, and n is an integer selected from 3 to 6 when R₁ is (CH₂)_nSO₃⁻ or (CH₂)_nSO₃H;

R₂ and R₃ are independently selected from the group consisting of H, a sulphonic moiety and a sulphonate moiety;

Q is selected from the group consisting of:

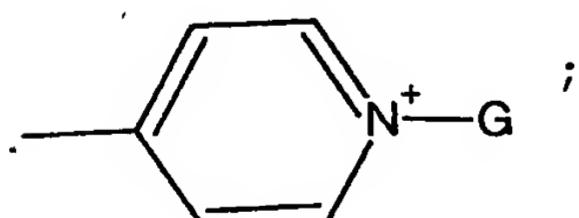
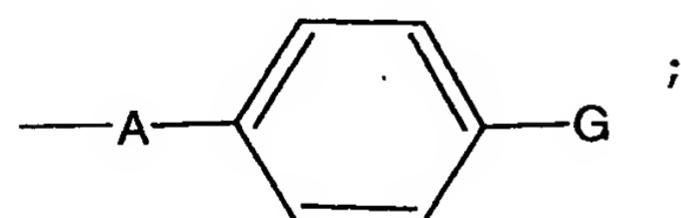
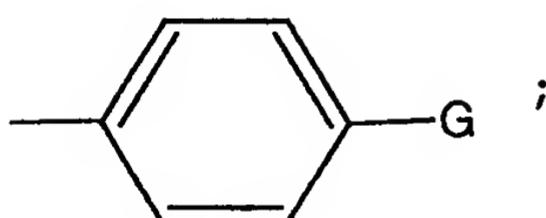


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wherein q is 0 or 1 and D is selected from the group consisting of:

$-C\equiv C-G$; and



wherein A is O or S and G is, or contains a N, O or S nucleophile moiety or is, or contains a moiety capable of reacting with N, O or S nucleophiles.